and not opening by pores as in Pyrola. Pollen white. Germ roundish, depressed, five angled, resting on a reddish, ten toothed, glandular ring. Style erect, straight. Stigma simple, moist. The fruit is a small, five celled capsule, invested with the calyx, which becomes large, round, and fleshy, having the appearance of a bright scarlet berry.

If the aroma or odour and also the taste of plants were susceptible of description in as definite language as their proportions and form, the sensible qualities of many vegetables might afford new grounds for generalizing and combining them together. The aromatic flavour of the Partridge berry, which cannot easily be mistaken by those who have once tasted it, may be recognised in a variety of other plants, whose botanical habits are very dissimilar. It exists very exactly in some of the other species of the same genus, particularly in *Gaultheria hispidula;* also in *Spiræa ulmaria* and the root of *Spiræa lobata.* It is particularly distinct in the bark of the Sweet birch, *Betula lenta*, one of our most useful and interesting trees.

This taste and odour reside in a volatile oil, which is easily separated by distillation. The essential oil of Gaultheria, which is often kept in our druggists' shops, is of a pale or greenish white

colour and perfectly transparent. It is one of the heaviest of the volatile oils, and sinks rapidly in water if a sufficient quantity be added to overcome the repulsion of two heterogeneous fluids. Its taste is aromatic, sweet and highly pungent.

The oil appears to contain the chief medicinal virtue of the plant, since I know of no case in which the leaves, deprived of their aroma, have been employed for any purpose. They are nevertheless considerably astringent, and exhibit the usual evidences of this property when combined with preparations of iron.

The berries, or berry-like calyces, have a pulpy but rather dry consistence, and a strong flavour of the plant. They are esteemed by some persons, but are hardly palatable enough to be considered esculent. In the colder seasons they afford food to the partridges and some other wild animals.

The leaves, the essence and the oil of this plant are kept for use in the apothecaries' shops. An infusion of the leaves has been used to communicate an agreeable flavour to tea, also as a substitute for that article by people in the country. Some physicians have prescribed it medicinally as an emmenagogue, with success in cases attended with debility. The oil, though somewhat less pungent than those of peppermint and origanum, is

JACOB BIGELOW *American Medical Botany* BOSTON, 1817-1820 CARY GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION, ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Octavo